

THE 3
PARISH PRIEST.
A
POEM,
UPON A
CLERGYMAN
Lately Deceas'd.

*Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord, for they rest from
their Labours, and their Works do follow them, Rev. xiv. 13.*



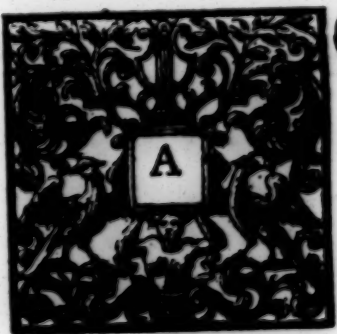
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THE
PARISH PRIEST.

A
POEM.



ACCEPT, dear Sire, this humble Tri-
bute paid,
This small Memorial to a Parent's
Shade.

Tho' fair the Hope thou reign'st enthron'd
on high,
Where Sin can never stain, nor Sorrow sigh;
A 2 Yet

Yet still a Son may duteous Mourning wear,
 And Nature unrepov'd may drop a Tear.
 No glozing Falsehood on thy Name is thrown,
 Which oft pollutes the monumental Stone.
 Plain Truth shall speak, which thou thy self
 might'st hear,
 As far from Flatt'ry, as it is from Fear.

A Parish Priest, not of the Pilgrim kind,
 But fix'd and faithful to the Post assign'd,
 Through various Scenes with equal Virtue trod,
 True to his Oath, his Order, and his God:
 Wise without Art he shone, in doubtful Days
 Of Fear, of Shame, of Danger, and of Praise.
 When zealous *James* unhappy sought the Way
 T' establish *Rome* by arbitrary Sway,
 Whose Crime from Fondness for Religion
 springs,
 (A Crime ne'er pardon'd in the Lives of Kings!)

'Twas

'Twas then the Christian Priest was nobly try'd,
When hireling Slaves embrac'd the stronger
Side,

And faintly Sects and Sycophants comply'd.
In vain were Bribes showr'd by the guilty
Crown,

He fought no Favour, as he fear'd no Frown.
Nor loudest Storms his steddy Purpose broke,
Firm, as the beaten Anvil, to the Stroke.
Secure in Faith, exempt from worldly Views,
He dar'd the *Declaration* to refuse.

Then from the sacred Pulpit boldly show'd
The dauntless *Hebrews* true to *Israel's* God,
Who spake regardless of their Kings commands,
“* The God we serve can save us from thy Hands;
“ If not, O Monarch, know we chuse to die,
“ Thy Gods alike and Threatnings we defy ;

* He preach'd on *Dan.* iii. 17, 18.

“ No

“ No Pow’r on Earth our Faith has e’er con-
 “ troul’d,

“ We scorn to worship Idols, tho’ of Gold.
 Resistless Truth damp’d all the Audience round,
 The base Informer sicken’d at the Sound ;
 Attentive Courtiers conscious stood amaz’d,
 And Soldiers silent trembled as they gaz’d.
 No smallest Murmur of Distaste arose,
 Abash’d and vanquish’d seem’d the Churches
 Foes.

So when like Zeal their Bosoms did inspire,
 The *Jewish* Martyrs walk’d unhurt in Fire.

Nor yet could *Romish* Faith so dreadful seem
 To fright his Judgment to a worse Extreme ;
 To throw up Creeds for fear of Papal Pow’r,
 And blame St. *Peter* for his Successor.

For when the Church her Danger had subdu'd
 And felt on Earth the usual Gratitude,
 When favour'd Sects o'erspread *Britannia's*
 Plains,

Like Frogs thick-swarming after Summer-
 Rains;

Against far diff'rent Foes alike prepar'd,
 No wild Disputer found him off his guard.

Nor those who following late *Socinus'* Plan
 Degraded God incarnate to a Man;

Nor those who wresting Texts with greater
 flight

With Heav'n, as taught by elder *Arius*, fight.

Reas'ners! who no Absurdity can see

In a new-made dependent Deity.

Amongst his Corn no Tares neglected spring:

That free-born Subjects ought to rule their
 King,

That

That Sense and Revelation disagree,
 That Zeal is still at War with Charity,
 That dust-born Reptiles may their God dis-
 own,
 And place their foolish Reason in his Throne.
 No Colours false deceiv'd his wary Eye,
 Nor luke-warm Peace, nor Atheist Liberty.
 Scripture and Fathers guide his Footsteps right;
 For Truth is one, but Error infinite.
 With Love to Souls and deepest Learning
 fraught,
 His Master's Gospel undisguis'd he taught.
 He show'd the Pow'r of Kings, the Mitre's Sway,
 Which Earth can neither give nor take away.
 That Duty from divine Command is known,
 Fix'd on th'Almighty's Will, and not our own.
 That Unbelievers must receive their Hire,
 The sure Allotment of eternal Fire.

And God the faithful Sower pleas'd to bless,
 And crown'd his Harvest with a vast Success.
 While forty Years his heav'nly Doctrine charms,
 No single Son forsakes the Churches Arms.
 * No Romish Wolf around his Fences prowl'd,
 Nor Fox Dissenter earth'd within his Fold.

Not but when Parties fierce in Feuds engage,
 When Moderation spurs her Sons to Rage,
 When all elect or reprobate have been,
 In these no Virtue dwells, in those no Sin ;
 Then their low Scandals on his Head they
 show'r,
 As Friend to papal and despotick Pow'r.
 E'en those who once were Tools to popish Aims,
 The treach'rous Darlings of deluded *James*,
 Who now the purest Reformation boast,
 Tho' then their tender Consciences were lost,

* There was not a *Dissenter* or *Papist* in his Parish.

E'en those far off with Lies his Fame assail
And their bad Patrons help the wicked Tale.
'Tis thus the Serpent to his Cavern glides,
And safe his wily Head from Winter hides.
But when returning Seasons Warmth inspire,
And wake his sleeping Poyson into Fire,
With Youth renew'd behold the Reptile rise !
He waves and glitters in the dog-day Skies,
Shoots cross the Road, when sounding Steps
draw near,
And springs t'assault the way-beat Traveller ;
Who durst his Course in Rains and Whirl-
winds hold,
And pass'd unshelter'd through *December's* Cold.

Griev'd for the Church's Shame, with pity-
ing Eye

They saw the worthless Objects lifted high,
Empty

Empty alike of Learning and of Brain,
 As if the Pope had re-assum'd his Reign,
 And brought our ancient *Mumpsimus* again. }
 With fruitless Toil let midnight Scholars pore,
 And dig the Mine, while others gain the Ore.
 Proud of Demerit, claiming as their own
 The Stall prebendal, or prelatick Throne.
 While *Johnson* from his *Cranbrook* ne'er shall
 part,

And *Fiddes* pining sighs with broken Heart.
 While *Grabe* in vain t'unthankful *Britain* flies, }
 And *Wall* neglected in a Corner lies, }
 And poor and unrewarded *Bingham* dies. }
 While Names obscure undue Advancement
 meet,

And *T----* could conquer *Stillingfleet*.
 Nor yet on those preferr'd he cast the Blame,
 Far more the Patrons than the Clerks inflame.

Patrons afraid of Sense, but not of Vice,
 Elate with Pride, or sunk with Avarice.
 Patrons by Villains sought, by Slaves ador'd ;
 Scorn'd by the Gen'rous, by the Good ab-
 horr'd.

Or private Rascals who from Conscience free,
 Search ev'ry latent Nook of Simony :
 Who but on base Conditions ne'er present,
 And future Tithes by present Bonds prevent.
 Or Knaves more publick, studious to promote
 Elections, bart'ring Benefice for Vote.
 Is he self-will'd, or knows he to obey ?
 Enough! no farther Tittle need you say.
 An useful Man may as he pleases live ;
 But Worth's a Crime we never can forgive :
 So when the *Roman Peter* wants an Heir,
 If Rogues of both Religions we compare,

Tho'

Tho' worthy Candidates the Popedom seek,
 Expert in *Latin*, and well-read in *Greek* ;
 The Conclave fly with *Machiavilian* views
 One to be govern'd, not to govern chuse.
 Like Quaker's human Learning they forswear,
 And Ignorance best fills th'unerring Chair.
 The Statesmen laugh, let *Bellarmino* go fume, }
 No fam'd *Perron* the Purple shall assume, }
 No, nor *Baronius*' self, the *Atlas* of their *Rome*. }

When Age not hasten'd on by Guilt or Cares
 Grac'd him with Silver Crown of hoary Hairs,
 His Looks the Tenour of his Soul exprefs,
 An easy unaffected Chearfulness,
 Stedfast, not stiff; and awful, not austere;
 Tho' courteous rev'rend, and tho' smooth fin-
 cere.

In

In Converſe free; for ev'ry Subject fit,
 The cooleſt Reaſon joyn'd the keenest Wit;
 Wit that with Aim reſiſtleſs knows to flie,
 Diſarms unthought of, and prevents Reply:
 So Light'ning falls the Mountain Oaks among,
 As ſure, as quick, as ſhining and as ſtrong.
 Skilful of ſportive Stories forth to pour
 A gay, an humorous, an exhauſtleſs Store,
 With ſharpeſt Point and juſteſt Force apply'd,
 The Purport never dark and never wide.
 Not Adverſaries ſelves Applauſe forbore,
 And thoſe who blam'd him moſt, admir'd him
 more.

Scarcely the *Phrygian* fam'd for moral Tales,
 Who uſeful Truth in pleaſing Fiction veils,
 Who Wiſdom deep in Plants and Brutes can
 find,

And makes all Creatures Tutors to Mankind;
 In

In apter Fable solid Sense convey'd,
 With sounder Substance, or with finer Shade.

He mourn'd with those who Pain or Want
 endure,

A Guardian Angel to the Sick and Poor.
 Where the two best of Charities he joyn'd
 To cure the Body and to heal the Mind.

* Across his Path no Wretch expiring lies
 Nor querulous Blind bewail their Loss of Eyes.
 No mangled Cripple there expos'd his Maim,
 The Shock of Nature, and the Nation's Shame ;
 The Stranger's View no startling Object meets,
 And no complaining griev'd his happy Streets.
 Oft as the Year brought back the glorious Day
 When Infant *Jesus* in a Manger lay, [came,
 Or when from Death the God triumphant
 Or when the Holy Ghost descends in Flame,

* There were no Beggars in his Town.

Around

Around his Board the welcome Needy fate,
 And croud his Parlour, not besiege his Gate.
 T'obey their Word his Children waited near,
 And learnt their Saviour's Image to revere.
 This Charity perform'd, the wealthier Guest
 Was call'd to share his hospitable Feast;
 The poor invited first his Table grace,
 And Riches only held the second Place.

While filken Courtiers and embroider'd
 Lords,
 To whom the Earth her Mines in vain affords,
 Too oft their Need unable to supply,
 In spite of Wealth are pinch'd with Poverty;
 His scanty Rent suffic'd for every Call,
 Large was his Plenty, tho' his Income small;
 Alike in Prudence and in Bounty skill'd,
 He never drain'd his Purse, nor ever fill'd.

None

None e'er did twice his ready Alms desire,
 Nor lack'd the Lab'rer his expected Hire :
 Enrich'd by doing good a Thousand fold,
 He rarely gain'd and never wanted Gold.
 Well-stor'd to give, and furnish'd still to lend,
 To raise the Friendless and support the Friend.
 With ceaseless Streams his well plac'd Trea-
 sure flows,

When spent increases, and by less'ning grows.
 So when *Elijah* dwelt on Earth, (as far
 As Miracle with Conduct we compare,) *Sarepta's*
 Widow hoping no supply,
 Thought on her little Store to eat and die.
 Soon as she welcom'd her prophetick Guest,
 The Cruse flow'd lib'ral, and the Corn in-
 creas'd ;

Th' Almighty Pow'r unfailing Plenty sent,
 The Oyl unwaisted and the Meal unspent.

C

Such

Such was the Man by Friends and Foes con-
 fest,
 Worthy the glorious Name of Parish Priest.
 Had not kind Heav'n some Champions pleas'd
 to show,
 In Merit high, tho' in Preferment low ;
 Whose Pray'rs and Tears might stop th' Al-
 mighty's Hand,
 Protecting Angels to a guilty Land,
 From Earth's vain Hopes and base Ambition
 free,
 Whose flighted but effectual Piety
 Stood like a Mound unshaken, to repress
 Th' o'erbearing Floods of prosp'rous Wicked-
 nefs:
 The Christian Faith had left *Britannia's* Coast,
 Her Lamp extinguish'd and her Gospel lost.

Our

Our Eyes e'er this had seen Religion fall,
 And black Apostasy had delug'd all.
 Nor more Remains of Truth had flourish'd
 here,
 Than where poor *Asia's* Ruins scarce appear,
 And *Unitarian Turks* their impious Crescent
 rear.

O could the Priest by God and Angels priz'd,
 By Fiends insulted, and by Fools despis'd,
 His Fight well-fought, when summon'd hence
 to go,
 Not then regardless of his Charge below;
 Tho' sudden snatch'd from our desiring Eyes,
 Bequeath his Mantle, as he mounts the Skies.

O may his Friends at the last dreadful Day,
 When all the frail Creation fades away,

When

When God incarnate fills the Judgment Throne,
Crown'd with his Father's Radiance and his
own,

Arise with Gladness, Bliss ordain'd to share,
And I transported meet a Father there !
See him lead up his Flock with happy Boast,
These Sheep thou gav'st me and not one is lost.
Exulting hear the final *Euge* given,
Enter thou faithful Servant to my Heav'n.
Glory which here tho' Faith may well believe,
No Speech can utter and no Thought conceive ;
When weary Time his utmost Race has run,
Glory through endless Ages but begun,
Beyond the glimm'ring Spark of our Meri-
dian Sun.

F I N I S.

